

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2116

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 1269

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, US
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM
CHONG -YOM.

SUMMARY: PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM CHONG-YOM
EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING TROOP WITHDRAWAL, PARTICULARLY
NEED FOR ADEQUATE TIME TO STRENGTHEN ROK FORCES AND FOR
FULL CONSULTATIONS WITH ROKG. HE SHOWED CONTINUED HARD LINE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. HE SAID ROKG COMMITTED TO PROCESS
OF GRADUAL TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND SEEKS TO AVOID PROBLEMS
FACED BY JAPAN IN THIS AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. I HAD LENGTHY PRIVATE LUNCHEON WITH PRESIDENTIAL
SECRETARY KIM TODAY, FEBRUARY 14, COVERING PRINCIPALLY
ISSUES OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND TRADE LIBERALI-
ZATION. WE ALSO DISCUSSED 1977 ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND
POSSIBLE KOREAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR AFRICA.

TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

2. I OPENED CONVERSATION BY REVIEWING BACKGROUND AND HISTORY
OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH JAPAN AND KOREA ON TROOP WITH-
DRAWAL ISSUE. I STRESSED THAT WE HAD IN FACT KEPT ROKG
INFORMED ON VICE PRESIDENT'S TRIP, INCLUDING TROOP WITH-
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DRAWAL ISSUE, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER TOKYO VISIT AND THAT,
BEYOND BASIC POLICY STATEMENT MADE BY PRESIDENT, WE HAD
NOT CONSULTED WITH EITHER GOVERNMENT SINCE NO DECISIONS
YET REACHED ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. IN FACT AT PRESENT TIME
WE ARE STILL CONSIDERING PROBLEM AND IN "FACT-FINDING"
STAGE, HEARING VIEWS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS. IN TOKYO, VICE
PRESIDENT HEARD OUT JAPANESE WHO POINTED OUT BOTH PUBLICLY

AND PRIVATELY TROOP WITHDRAWAL ISSUE IS BILATERAL US-ROK QUESTION AND HE PROVIDED ONLY REITERATION OF ASSURANCES ALREADY GIVEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER. FEARS THAT USG IS CONSULTING FIRST WITH JAPANESE ARE UNWARRANTED. I ASSURED KIM THAT ONCE CONSIDERATION OF ISSUE IS COMPLETED, AT NEXT PHASE THERE WOULD BE FULL CONSULTATIONS WITH ROKG. HOWEVER, EVEN DURING FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WE WOULD STILL BE IN "FACT-FINDING" PHASE AND PREPARED TO HEAR VIEWS OF KOREAN GOVERNMENT WITHOUT GETTING INTO DETAILED DISCUSSIONS.

3. KIM SAID HE WAS REASSURED BY MY EXPLANATION AND WOULD TRANSMIT IT FULLY TO PRESIDENT PARK. HE THEN WENT ON TO STATE THAT KOREAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE HOPED US FORCES WOULD NOT TOTALLY WITHDRAW FROM KOREA AND THAT ANY WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL COMPLETION OF THE FIVE-YEAR DEFENSE PLAN IN 1980. HOWEVER, IF THERE WERE TO BE WITHDRAWALS BEFOREHAND, KOREAN GOVERNMENT SOUGHT ADEQUATE STEPS TO MAKE UP FOR GAPS IN KOREAN DEFENSE CREATED THEREBY. FINALLY, HE THEN STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT PARK IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT HE WILL BE PRESENTED WITH US WITHDRAWAL PLAN AND WILL NOT HAVE ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT OR COMMENT ON IT.

4. IN RESPONSE, I ASSURED KIM, FIRST, THAT WE HAD NO INTENTION OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF ALL US FORCES BUT WERE ONLY CONSIDERING GROUND FORCES WITHDRAWAL, SECOND, THAT WE HAD ALREADY MADE CLEAR THAT SUCH WITHDRAWAL WOULD NOT BE PRECIPITIOUS OR DESTABILIZING AND WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ROK GROUND FORCES DEFICIENCIES, AND THIRD, THAT THERE WOULD

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INDEED BE FULL CONSULTATIONS AS WAS CASE WITH GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF BOTH AIR DEFENSE AND MISSLE COMMAND NOW UNDER WAY.

5. I POINTED OUT THAT ISSUE INVOLVED WAS NOT US SECURITY COMMITMENT TO KOREA WHICH HAS BEEN FULLY REAFFIRMED BY CARTER ADMINISTRATION, BUT LEVEL OF US FORCES NEEDED IN KOREA TO FULFIL THIS COMMITMENT. ALREADY IT IS CLEAR THAT US AIR FORCES PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE AS DETERRENT TO NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION WHILE SECOND DIVISION HAS ONLY RESERVE MISSION, WHICH KIM ACKNOWLEDGED. WITHDRAWAL OF GROUND FORCES WOULD BE WITHIN THIS OVERALL FRAMEWORK SINCE IT IS OUR CONTINUING INTENTION TO DETER AGGRESSION AND NOT DESTABILIZE NORTHEAST ASIA. I FINALLY REMINDED KIM THAT JAPAN HAS LEGITIMATE, IF SECONDARY, ROLE AS CONSULTANT IN PROCESS AND IT IS IN KOREA'S INTEREST NOT TO IGNORE JAPANESE INTEREST SINCE AMONG OTHER FACTORS US MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN KOREA NEED TO BE SUPPORTED BY US BASES IN JAPAN.

6. KIM REACTED POSITIVELY TO THIS APPROACH, BUT REMINDED ME OF CONTINUED CONCERNS OF KOREAN PUBLIC THAT WE MIGHT PULL OUT COMPLETELY FROM KOREA. HE ALSO ASKED ABOUT TIMING OF FULL CONSULTATIONS AND I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO GIVE GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 1269

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HUMAN RIGHTS.

7. I REMINDED KIM OF THE STATEMENTS AND STRONG FEELINGS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, POINTING TO RECENT STATEMENTS WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET ACTIONS. KIM SAID THAT ROKG WAS FULLY AWARE OF THESE VIEWS, BUT FELT THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN KOREA WAS NOT COMPARABLE TO THAT IN THE SOVIET UNION OR EVEN THE PHILIPPINES OR INDONESIA. HE THEN WENT OVER THE USUAL SECURITY RATIONALE FOR KOREA'S CONTROL OF MINORITY CRITICISM AND GAVE NO HINT OF COMPROMISE OR LENIENCY ON THE MYONGDONG CASE. I POINTED TO THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS ISSUE AND URGED ALSO THAT ROKG CONSIDER THE PROBLEM FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF ITS OWN INTEREST AS WELL. KIM THEN RETREATED JUST A BIT FROM HIS STRONG STANCE AND SPOKE OF CONCERNS REGARDING INCREASED OPPOSITION PRESSURES INCLUDING MAJOR STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS REQUIRING A STERN ROKG REACTION IF ROKG WERE TO TAKE LENIENT MEASURES. IT FEARS OPPOSITION IS UNDULY ENCOURAGED TO PRESS ITS CASE VERY HARD BY HOPES NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD GIVE IT FULL SUPPORT. NEVERTHELESS, ROKG RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM IT FACED WITH US, ALTHOUGH HOPING TO GET GREATER UNDERSTANDING FROM THE USG.

TRADE LIBERALIZATION.

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8. KIM SAID THAT ROKG IS FULLY COMMITTED TO POLICY OF GRADUAL TRADE LIBERALIZATION STARTED THIS YEAR. IT RECOGNIZES THAT ABSENCE OF LIBERALIZATION MEASURES COULD RESULT IN TRADE WAR AND REACTIONS AGAINST KOREAN EXPORTS. ROKG HAS IN FACT UNDERTAKEN STUDY OF JAPAN'S TRADE PROBLEMS IN THE 1960'S AND EARLY '70'S, WITH A VIEW TO NOT REPEATING MISTAKES MADE BY GOJ. I STRONGLY ENCOURAGED THIS POSITION AND ALSO URGED A MORE ACTIVE ROLE BY ROKG IN TOKYO UND TRADE NEGOTIATIONS IN INTEREST OF FURTHER LIBERLIZATION.

9. ECONOMIC PROSPECTS.

KIM WAS QUITE ENCOURAGED BY EARLY RETURNS IN THE TRADE ACCOUNT AND IS CONFIDENT THAT KOREA CAN MEET ITS ECONOMIC GOALS FOR 1977. HE SAID THAT FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1 TO FEBRUARY 11 THERE HAD BEEN A 50 PER CENT INCREASE IN EXPORTS AND A 40 PERCENT INCREASE IN EXPORT LC'S. IN THIS CONNECTION HE HIGHLY COMMENDED US EFFORTS TO STIMULATE THE WORLD ECONOMY, AND PARTICULARLY TO URGE JAPAN AND GERMANY TO TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES. HE FELT THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S TRIP HAD BEEN VERY MUCH IN KOREA'S ECONOMIC INTEREST, A POINT HE NOTED LOST SIGHT OF BY THE KOREAN PRESS. I REVIEWED OTHER MEASURES PROJECTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION WHICH WOULD LIKEWISE BE HELPFUL TO KOREA'S IMAGE.

10. AFRICAN ASSISTANCE.

KIM SAID THAT AFTER HEARING REPORTS OF KOREA'S AMBASSADORS IN AFRICA PRESIDENT PARK HAD DIRECTED AN IMMEDIATE STUDY AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO AFRICA INCLUDING SMALL AMOUNTS OF GRANT AID. THE PROGRAM WOULD EMBRACE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, EXPORT-IMPORT LOANS, AND POSSIBLE JOINT VENTURES.

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Message Attributes

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